

FIRST HARVESTS

(A Collection of Poems from Nkongho-Mboland)

EDITED BY
Fonkeng E.F. & Fonsah, E.G.



VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

First Harvests

(A Collection of Poems from
Nkongho-Mboland)

Edited by

**Fonkeng E.F
& Fonsah E.G.**



Langa Research & Publishing CIG
Mankon, Bamenda

Publisher

Langaa RPCIG

Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group

P.O. Box 902 Mankon

Bamenda

North West Region

Cameroon

Langaagrp@gmail.com

www.langaa-rpcig.net

Distributed in and outside N. America by African Books Collective

orders@africanbookscollective.com

www.africanbookcollective.com

ISBN: 9956-728-04-7

© Fonkeng E.F. & E.G. Fonsah 2012

DISCLAIMER

All views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Langaa RPCIG.

Dedication

Mbob Ambrose Fonge

(1927 – 1990)

Student, friend, father, teacher, counselor, intellectual,
philanthropist

All rolled into one, as no boundary did your life establish but
to all things good

Of a conscience and moral probity beyond reproach.

A life inspired by a vision of enrichment of the human mind
and the building of the complete human being as the antidote
to prevailing human and societal problems.

Many things and tasks in a full life

Catholic parish leader,

Trade unionist, as Secretary of the National Teachers' Union
of Cameroon

Politician (when the word was clean), and the testimony of a
kindred spirit offered by the people of Fontem

Who, in 1963, would choose this 'stranger' as their candidate-
representative for the West Cameroon Parliament

Above all, a career teacher - your calling, vocation and
passion, for over forty years.

The loose and tenuous kinship with financial reward or
personal aggrandizement of no concern to you

Would not jump ship, as many contemporaries, to the
lucrative field of 'government teacher'

The pressures from friends and family notwithstanding

Happy, it seemed all along, to work for a pittance till the drawing of the curtain

Happier still, fighting the curse of illiteracy from wherever it reared its head.

At many stations too, you stopped, on this journey: Mbetta, Fontem, Soppo, Mutengene, Kumba...

Bringing out of this man the *summum bonum*

Through your house and hands, and under your wings the philanthropist in you,

would ensure an education for willing but hard-pressed kids, their tuition in toe at the slightest sign of parental inability to pay

Man of modest formal education, yourself

From under your protective wings would fly out eventual doctors, professors, researchers....

We seek to understand your depth, Mboh

Opened your home to children and parents seeking help with life's sundry problems.

Counselor

Born in July 1927, of a modest background, modestly you would strive to live

Billed for succession, as the eldest son to the village chief

You would defer to your younger brother, when the time came, to ascend to the throne

A precedent, thus, you created in the land through this humbly mighty act

And who but a trailblazer and thinker outside the box to enroll a son into St. Theresia all-girls school, Kumba?

Thereby singlehandedly putting an end to the practice of single sex schools

What but a trailblazing act your pluri-denominational Big Ten
group for the cause of education across Memel!
A true testimony of your Intellectual credential

Remiss we would be if we did not call to mind and cherish
your holding court among the people,
As you would draw on all the rich proverbs and wisdom
sayings of Lekongho -
the only language you are credited to ever speaking to your
children! -
As you explained the rewards of education, and imparted
your wisdom on life

A deserved State medal later in life does not even begin to
pay our debt to you
Bigger than the Ngungu, above which you tower
We are all, language, sex and creed inconsequential
A little richer in virtues and our station in life
Because of You, Mboh

.

For you, dear friend, father, teacher, counselor, worker,
philanthropist....
The ancestors have created a soft spot!
For you to lay back, and marvel
'Did I do all these things?'
Yes, you did – and more!

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	v
Endnotes.....	61
About the Authors.....	63

Part I: Tributes..... 1

Acha Tugi.....	3
Invisible Gift.....	4
Little and Big Things.....	5
For the sake of principle.....	6
Treasure.....	7
Meditation.....	8
First Christmas.....	9
Tribute.....	10
Ako Aya.....	11
Childhood.....	12
Mother.....	13
The Birocol Song.....	14
Missing You.....	15

Part II: Encounters.....17

Miss Ngeme.....	19
Feelings.....	20
Love.....	20
Not Hate.....	21
Hurt.....	22
The distance between our bond.....	23
Love Daze.....	24
Mile Six Beach.....	25

The View from Ngeme Village.....	26
The Cat and the Dog.....	27
The Sex Controversy.....	29
Na Man kill Man.....	30
My way, Your Way.....	31
Know Thyself.....	32
The Captive.....	33
Children.....	34
In Lighter Moments.....	35

Part III: Loss.....37

My Best Friend.....	39
Acada.....	40
Na Wanda.....	40
The Great Hawk.....	42
Anxiety.....	43
Brain Drain.....	44
Unholy Trinity.....	45
To Ngwenka.....	46
Crocodile Tears.....	47
Bandit Hymn.....	48
Ebamu of the Hills.....	49
Psycho-vibration.....	51
Mu-ngang.....	52
The Accident.....	53
The Night Train.....	54
Out of Sight.....	56
Mariana Mariana.....	57
Telepathy.....	58
My name is Pungo.....	59

Introduction

Welcome to the first ever poetry collection by a few sons and daughters of Nkongho-Mbo origin. It is not so much the origin of the authors as it is the fact that this outcome is actually a ‘side-show’ to a much more ambitious project we have been contemplating for some time now: a comprehensive title on the Nkongho-Mbos.

The Nkongho-Mbos are a sub-group of the Mbo ethnic group of Cameroon, Central Africa, on whom not much has been written and/or published. The reasons for this we ignore, but we figure it has much to do with the smallness of the group, compared to the others, and its consequent absence of influence on the aggregate political, social and economic structure and system of the country.

So, as you wait for that first comprehensive title on the Mbos, we trust you will enjoy these verses which, as one of the authors puts it, are no more than “expressions of impressions” on a variety of local and universal phenomena and states of being.

Acha Tugi

Rising and falling
Through a dusty, rocky and tortuous road
and landscape
And there in sight is Acha Tugi

Pockets of man-made forest
Cypress and eucalyptus grace open grass fields
Dance to the quick succession of rhythms
Gentle and violent – of the morning harmattan

Red-roofed structures
Architecture embellished
In simple, couleur locale, sublime
Inside, a hospital so real

A friendly and brotherly staff
In whom simplicity reigns supreme
And of a devotion truly zealous

Each morning they trickle in, the sick
In tens, hundreds, long faces they pull
Long faces they pull
Aggrieved by tribulations of every name

Then, at the end of a sojourn
Long or short
Homeward-bound they set
Faces beaming with smiles

For true solace
Bodily and in spirit

They found and got in Acha Tugi
Home away from home

Fonkeng E.f.

Invisible Gift

Here I stand alone, in the wilderness
Staring at what looks like your tomb
Unable to determine where to lay the flowers
For that I beg for your forgiveness

I wonder and I question
Why, mostly, I'm never around on this day
Always in some transcontinental flight
Thinking of you and weeping in silence

I thought I'd come around this time
So close as to feel your presence
So you would help me locate the exact spot
Before I jet off on yet another long-distance one

Intentional or coincidental, I know not
Despite my philosophizing and spiritualizing
Still, I thank you for the gift you offered a few days after the
burial
Its twenty-four years today; how you looked gorgeous in that
burial suit!

I never told a soul about the gift, except one
An elder warned me never to mention it again
As some powerful spirit might snatch it away from me

They found and got in Acha Tugi
Home away from home

Fonkeng E.f.

Invisible Gift

Here I stand alone, in the wilderness
Staring at what looks like your tomb
Unable to determine where to lay the flowers
For that I beg for your forgiveness

I wonder and I question
Why, mostly, I'm never around on this day
Always in some transcontinental flight
Thinking of you and weeping in silence

I thought I'd come around this time
So close as to feel your presence
So you would help me locate the exact spot
Before I jet off on yet another long-distance one

Intentional or coincidental, I know not
Despite my philosophizing and spiritualizing
Still, I thank you for the gift you offered a few days after the
burial
Its twenty-four years today; how you looked gorgeous in that
burial suit!

I never told a soul about the gift, except one
An elder warned me never to mention it again
As some powerful spirit might snatch it away from me

Sorry if I did offend you. I was only sixteen then
Again, I thank you, Dad, I love you.

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Little and Big Things

They had a bit, a tiny little bit
Just an infinitesimal fraction of the whole
They were humorous, friendly and liked by everyone
They wished they had a little more

They had a bit, a tiny little stolen bit
No one bothered to find out the source
'Cause it was little, so little to arouse suspicions
It gave them happiness and pleasure

They had a little bit, which was snatched away by time
It brought them unhappiness, moodiness, and pain
They realized the little bit was more than enough if rationed
They only had to stretch existence of the tiny little bit

They had a little bit, a tiny little unattended bit
The owners suspected a tiny little portion of their fortress
was missing
It was too tiny to be bothered with for those who had in
abundance
But, it was a treasure for those who lay stake to attain the tiny
bit.

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Sorry if I did offend you. I was only sixteen then
Again, I thank you, Dad, I love you.

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Little and Big Things

They had a bit, a tiny little bit
Just an infinitesimal fraction of the whole
They were humorous, friendly and liked by everyone
They wished they had a little more

They had a bit, a tiny little stolen bit
No one bothered to find out the source
'Cause it was little, so little to arouse suspicions
It gave them happiness and pleasure

They had a little bit, which was snatched away by time
It brought them unhappiness, moodiness, and pain
They realized the little bit was more than enough if rationed
They only had to stretch existence of the tiny little bit

They had a little bit, a tiny little unattended bit
The owners suspected a tiny little portion of their fortress
was missing
It was too tiny to be bothered with for those who had in
abundance
But, it was a treasure for those who lay stake to attain the tiny
bit.

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

For the Sake of Principle

Da man
Pah Long Trosa
Mbo lawyer
Pocket lawyer

Names he's bagged in abundance
A testimony of the awe
He's never ceased to create
But of all, never 'been loved.

For a strict and ascetic life
Probity in public and private realm
An extreme rigid consistency
Pursues he straightforwardly

Tall and lanky
Religiously clean-shaven
Assuredly he gently walks
Need still he sees not
Although well an octogenarian
For a third leg

Fonkeng E.f.

Treasure

I can only have a bit
For someone else has it big
I wish I could get it all
I know I can't for sure

My bit is however cherished
As without it I could perish
Even though I loose the big
I will always have this bit

My bit is not a whole
But is printed in my soul
I take it everywhere I go
And with it make my being whole

My heart aches seeing so much
For the uncertainty without much
But I hang on to my bit
For the consolation I need

Forsac D. Eto gokwe

Meditation

I thank you for all the blessings
For the spiritual doctrine and philosophy
For the departing gift
I took your advice – everything you said has come true

You taught me that hard work assures a future
Indeed, it has brightened mine
Everything I dreamed, I have achieved
Education, fame, good job, self-esteem and self-actualization

We now have more than we ever before
Mom is still alive, old but strong, healthy and kicking
We cannot use the things we have by ourselves
We wish you were around to share them with us

We have a son who looks just like you
He is as handsome as you
He is as stubborn as you
He is as smart as you

Could it be that you came back just like you said?
Should I agonize then over your share of the cake?
He, who we named after you has it big
Could this be a mere coincidence?

Please explain this to me like in the past, would you?
I'd also want to know your whereabouts presently
Are you with our Ancestors, where?
I miss you so very much.

Esendugue Greg Fonsah

First Christmas

He was just four months old
Mom and Dad were very poor
She won't miss the church service for the world
Although she had no cloth for her two children

He was only four months old
Mama insisted to honor the birth of Christ
Mama wrapped him up in a torn rag
His sister had on an old dress

As Mama ascended the staircase to the church
She missed her steps and fell
Her four month old was crying
His sister was bleeding to death

Thirty-eight years later, this day was different
The four month old now had more than one person could
possibly have
Friends of every horizon were invited to a lavish candlelight
buffet
They drank the most expensive wine and champagne

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Tribute

(To my dear friend Ephraim)

When the story of a life is written
It will say I found a friend in you
Sometimes we sing of the friendship we have
Ours though not sung is real ad true
Thank you for your friendship

Some hearts must train to be good and loving
Some minds must train to be open and receptive
Some spirits must evolve to be joyful and illuminating
You need not train, you need not evolve
These gifts were yours at birth

Convention commands the young will learn from the old
Yet from you I have learnt a lot
Uplifting qualities rare to find in one
A glowing heart overflowing with love
You have them all and so much more

The mystery of life unfolds through time
We know not where it will lead us
As long as it is in my power to do
I will always hold you dear and true
Thank you for your friendship

Forsac Amatus

Ako Aya

And so rolls the life of a fighter
Short, yet not sweet
Painful to his followers
Your loss, reason we have to mourn
‘Cause in it we find not a surrogate

A cause so valiant you alone championed
Where others bow out unceremoniously
That freedom is not received on a golden platter...
But is won battle after battle
That truth is not found under the king's boots
But is borne out of the 'market place of ideas'
A meaning of life you fought to portray
That man does not live by bread alone

Yonder, with our ancestors, you're gone to rest
Leaving us orphans for ourselves, to nest
Still, the courageous leadership
Synonymous with your name
Is more than enough inspiration and incitement
A truly evergreen homage to you to pay
In vigilance and service

So rolls the life of a fighter

Fonkeng E.f.

Childhood

The innocence I cannot express
The feelings, I do remember
A Golden Age of Being, it was
A time of adventure and naivety, it was
So precious yet so ephemeral
T'was yesterday

Youth is Paradise
It is trusting absolutely
It is purity of heart
A heart divine, well, like God's

What happened to Paradise?
Well, we grew and so did the weeds around us
We became contaminated
No longer innocent
No longer pure
No longer adventurous
No longer naïve
Hell has taken over
We beg only, for forgiveness

Today, we sit and yearn
Yearn for your Return
Lessons ingrained cannot be forgotten
We struggle to return to hope
And there is hope
Hope, to return to innocence
Hope, if we do right
Hope, through our children
To relive the times

Times, where we too were once free

Fonge T. Tobias

Mother

Dearest, sweetest mother
Incomparable one
Most cherished possession ever
Is it true you're gone?

Warm, kind and loving
Best counselor ever
What pay for all the mighty deeds?
Be absent to bid farewell!

Brave warrior who would not bend
To sickness and worldly tribulations
The man-eaters may rejoice
But who lasts forever?

It grieves to see you depart – so soon
Mother, for whom did I chase the golden fleece?
I thought I could reciprocate your love
And assuage your sufferings

No! The one who gives and takes
Has taken as He gave
In the wilderness I stand, arms outstretched
Seeking to touch yours

Mother, I hope and pray and believe

Times, where we too were once free

Fonge T. Tobias

Mother

Dearest, sweetest mother
Incomparable one
Most cherished possession ever
Is it true you're gone?

Warm, kind and loving
Best counselor ever
What pay for all the mighty deeds?
Be absent to bid farewell!

Brave warrior who would not bend
To sickness and worldly tribulations
The man-eaters may rejoice
But who lasts forever?

It grieves to see you depart – so soon
Mother, for whom did I chase the golden fleece?
I thought I could reciprocate your love
And assuage your sufferings

No! The one who gives and takes
Has taken as He gave
In the wilderness I stand, arms outstretched
Seeking to touch yours

Mother, I hope and pray and believe

With your undaunting faith
Your journey will come to a sweet end
Did it not begin on Christmas day?

Ahead you're gone, preparing the way
With them before you watch over me
When finally I come
Never no more shall we ever part

Fonkeng E.f.

The Birocol Song

Brotherhood, Rectitude, Service
From you, these our triple credo
Implanted in the fresh minds we were
Fresh as the nearby Tole tea we daily drank
Under the cold, breezy yet fresh and sweet
Slopes of Soppo – below the Mount Fako

Mens sana in corpore sano
Every sixteen hours in a workful day
We read history, *econs*, maths, music and all
The unique excitement of it all – Latin!
We recited *Mentor* and *Cicero*
In Soppo we sang and danced, played and prayed

In self-help our own land we farmed
Washed our dishes and cleaned our hostels
Life we 'entered' through the Club Spirit
To uphold we pledge the lesson in all these
Laborare est Orare
That to work is to pray

With your undaunting faith
Your journey will come to a sweet end
Did it not begin on Christmas day?

Ahead you're gone, preparing the way
With them before you watch over me
When finally I come
Never no more shall we ever part

Fonkeng E.f.

The Birocol Song

Brotherhood, Rectitude, Service
From you, these our triple credo
Implanted in the fresh minds we were
Fresh as the nearby Tole tea we daily drank
Under the cold, breezy yet fresh and sweet
Slopes of Soppo – below the Mount Fako

Mens sana in corpore sano
Every sixteen hours in a workful day
We read history, *econs*, maths, music and all
The unique excitement of it all – Latin!
We recited *Mentor* and *Cicero*
In Soppo we sang and danced, played and prayed

In self-help our own land we farmed
Washed our dishes and cleaned our hostels
Life we 'entered' through the Club Spirit
To uphold we pledge the lesson in all these
Laborare est Orare
That to work is to pray

Birocol, my Alma Mater ever dear
To the revered memory of a brave Father
O! the Rev'rend Bishop Peter Rogan
Moulding the tender hearts to temples of
Brotherhood, Rectitude and Service
For always with you we shall be

Fonkeng, E.f.

Missing You

I wish it were just us
I wish it were in Nature plain
I wish it were in the jungle, with waterfalls
I wish it were in the heart of a banana plantation

It's got to be the long awaited reunion and moments spent
together
It's got to be the last letter as the distance between us widens
Gosh – all the wishes were miraculously fulfilled
And, I miss them

I also miss the expensive bad habits
Which I never tolerated
But I did, this time around
I miss the angelic smiles that brought sunshine in our family
and being

I miss the telepathic attitude and the running downstairs
To deliver the most appealing and welcoming kisses

Birocol, my Alma Mater ever dear
To the revered memory of a brave Father
O! the Rev'rend Bishop Peter Rogan
Moulding the tender hearts to temples of
Brotherhood, Rectitude and Service
For always with you we shall be

Fonkeng, E.f.

Missing You

I wish it were just us
I wish it were in Nature plain
I wish it were in the jungle, with waterfalls
I wish it were in the heart of a banana plantation

It's got to be the long awaited reunion and moments spent
together
It's got to be the last letter as the distance between us widens
Gosh – all the wishes were miraculously fulfilled
And, I miss them

I also miss the expensive bad habits
Which I never tolerated
But I did, this time around
I miss the angelic smiles that brought sunshine in our family
and being

I miss the telepathic attitude and the running downstairs
To deliver the most appealing and welcoming kisses

And the red carpeted hugs that facilitated our movement
upstairs

I miss the care and concern that brought humor

And kept the whole atmosphere alive and easy to dwell on

I miss the ebony straight hair

The massages, the smooth and gentle touches

That added flavor in our love life, and above all

I miss you very much

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Miss Ngeme

Her long silky dark hair rose majestically
Then her black slant eyes irradiated like the full moon
Everyone froze, stared admiringly
Trying to guess – Miss Ngeme?
Miss Ngeme! the thought ran through several minds

The door opened slowly, the stares persisted
A well-shaped pair of legs touched the ground, softly
On them, an evenly trimmed sculpture of a body
Sending an exciting signal to all who watched with anxiety
Must be Miss Ngeme, someone in the crowd whispered

The most gorgeous creature ever seen around here
A vibrant smile, that took away everyone's breath
Embedded in a short, black dress that exhibited the equitable
Dimensions of each body part, rendering her even prettier
Was she a fairy, Miss Ngeme, or both?

The soft and seductive voice blended in with her beauty-
power
Her slim layered moistened lips were irresistible
Miss Ngeme, indeed, named after the village that lies
Between the Atlantic Ocean and the foot of Mount Fako

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Feelings

You've burst open my ball of inspiration
It comes flowing like lava from an erupting mountain
With no one but you to appreciate its content
No one but you to understand

Illness comes into my way
And reduces my level of concentration
But I pray to God and fight hard
To face up to the challenges you set
And through success make us two proud

Watching *Titanic* brings back good memories
And I re-live every moment of it
Two who would steal any extra minute to be together
I never knew love could be this strong

Forsac D. Eto gokwe

Love

What is your name?
Are you affection, passion?
Infatuation, enchantment?
Emotion, fondness?
Or is it respect, regard?
Appreciation and devotion?
What is it?

Should we use your name when touched?
When we experience emotional fulfillment?

Feelings

You've burst open my ball of inspiration
It comes flowing like lava from an erupting mountain
With no one but you to appreciate its content
No one but you to understand

Illness comes into my way
And reduces my level of concentration
But I pray to God and fight hard
To face up to the challenges you set
And through success make us two proud

Watching *Titanic* brings back good memories
And I re-live every moment of it
Two who would steal any extra minute to be together
I never knew love could be this strong

Forsac D. Eto gokwe

Love

What is your name?
Are you affection, passion?
Infatuation, enchantment?
Emotion, fondness?
Or is it respect, regard?
Appreciation and devotion?
What is it?

Should we use your name when touched?
When we experience emotional fulfillment?

Where is your boundary?
Should we use your name for the spiritual?
And the physical?

Or is it fair to you to use your name
To describe notions?
Is your name that meaningless?
I yearn to know your boundary
If you have no boundary
I revere you not
No doubt, your name is such commonplace

Fonge T. Tobias

Not Hate

It was not hatred
Nor was it dislike
Though one gave it
To be known that
It was one of the two

Of admiration and attraction
It might have been one
Not hatred, not even dislike

Some gestures were forgivable
As they were coy or pompous
But one could not hate
Not dislike for that

A fair thing in complexion

Where is your boundary?
Should we use your name for the spiritual?
And the physical?

Or is it fair to you to use your name
To describe notions?
Is your name that meaningless?
I yearn to know your boundary
If you have no boundary
I revere you not
No doubt, your name is such commonplace

Fonge T. Tobias

Not Hate

It was not hatred
Nor was it dislike
Though one gave it
To be known that
It was one of the two

Of admiration and attraction
It might have been one
Not hatred, not even dislike

Some gestures were forgivable
As they were coy or pompous
But one could not hate
Not dislike for that

A fair thing in complexion

Fair in cut and build
Fair in nurture and habit
Nothing could one fairer find
After long, long a sojourn

Fombin P.F.

Hurt

I hurt like I've never known
My heart aches, my soul weeps
My tongue dries up
My very foundation is shaken
My concentration weakens
My vision blurs
Regrets fill my heart

I hurt to think about it
I hurt and can't measure
I hurt like you'd never know
For you are not in me

How did I get so hurt
Why did I allow it
How can I manage it
It hurt me more than I can say

I'll figure out the source
I'll keep away from it
I can't manage another
I'll crash under its weight

Fair in cut and build
Fair in nurture and habit
Nothing could one fairer find
After long, long a sojourn

Fombin P.F.

Hurt

I hurt like I've never known
My heart aches, my soul weeps
My tongue dries up
My very foundation is shaken
My concentration weakens
My vision blurs
Regrets fill my heart

I hurt to think about it
I hurt and can't measure
I hurt like you'd never know
For you are not in me

How did I get so hurt
Why did I allow it
How can I manage it
It hurt me more than I can say

I'll figure out the source
I'll keep away from it
I can't manage another
I'll crash under its weight

I hurt against my will
I pray to God it stops
I weep to soothe my hurt
I weep to sleep off my hurt

Forsac D. Eto gokwe

The Distance between our Bond

They waited for me in the office
They stood up, chanting the birthday song
Surprise and shock, I walked right through the singing crowd
I did not remember my birthday

My boss rushed into my file to verify
My colleagues paused as I paraded to my desk
They watched with astonishment
I suspected something was amiss, and ooops

September 15, I exclaimed
Humh, my American colleagues answered
“What’s wrong with you, man?”
Don’t you Africans have birthdays?

Sorry, I’m just not used to it
I never had one before
What do you mean? We can’t understand
You Africans don’t have birthdays?

We do if you’re uppity
I had my birthday at my birth
I’m still waiting my death day.

I hurt against my will
I pray to God it stops
I weep to soothe my hurt
I weep to sleep off my hurt

Forsac D. Eto gokwe

The Distance between our Bond

They waited for me in the office
They stood up, chanting the birthday song
Surprise and shock, I walked right through the singing crowd
I did not remember my birthday

My boss rushed into my file to verify
My colleagues paused as I paraded to my desk
They watched with astonishment
I suspected something was amiss, and ooops

September 15, I exclaimed
Humh, my American colleagues answered
“What’s wrong with you, man?”
Don’t you Africans have birthdays?

Sorry, I’m just not used to it
I never had one before
What do you mean? We can’t understand
You Africans don’t have birthdays?

We do if you’re uppity
I had my birthday at my birth
I’m still waiting my death day.

My truth shocked them
And this, the distance between our bond

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Love Daze

She lay still in a transparent coffin
All the beauty gone despite the make-up
Alas, the photograph on the wall looked real
Sending out magnetic vibrations
As those she cared most could feel the presence

Then she stood next to the picture on the wall
A semblance of her living state
But for her complexion and her name
And the glasses, a mere camouflage, of course
She turned 180 degrees, our eyes met
She was prettier than ever

For a moment, I was dumbfounded
Her magnetic signals sent a chill down my spine
And the message was gradually transmitted
She completely reverted the terms of our friendship
Impossible it was to resist the temptation
Even though we both were engaged and she, dead, in my
mind

The sensations were too good to be true
The were scary, and even after a decade of friendship
Her hot smiles, touches, kisses could melt even a steel bar

My truth shocked them
And this, the distance between our bond

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Love Daze

She lay still in a transparent coffin
All the beauty gone despite the make-up
Alas, the photograph on the wall looked real
Sending out magnetic vibrations
As those she cared most could feel the presence

Then she stood next to the picture on the wall
A semblance of her living state
But for her complexion and her name
And the glasses, a mere camouflage, of course
She turned 180 degrees, our eyes met
She was prettier than ever

For a moment, I was dumbfounded
Her magnetic signals sent a chill down my spine
And the message was gradually transmitted
She completely reverted the terms of our friendship
Impossible it was to resist the temptation
Even though we both were engaged and she, dead, in my
mind

The sensations were too good to be true
The were scary, and even after a decade of friendship
Her hot smiles, touches, kisses could melt even a steel bar

Her body cliffs, secluded valleys and her love lava stretching
to Seme Beach
Was she a ghost or fairy? Was she simply my imagination?
Or was this reincarnation?

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Mile Six Beach

We hit the highway heading South West
As we listened to Nat King Cole's best hits
Our destination, Mile Six Beach
In the heart of the rainy season

Somehow, the weather was bright with sunshine
The perfect blue sky, with patches of white clouds
Some resembled clusters of Fako ready to erupt
Others, like parading dinosaurs

The ocean waves slammed against the huge clustered shores
of volcanic rock
The mangrove trees swayed sideways to the music of the
wind
The kingfishers flew all about singing songs of the land
While hunting fishes by the shore

On the beach, a sampling of every nationality
A United Nations in the heart of Africa
Some wore dental floss, boxing shorts or braces
Others in tempting bikini stripes
Lovers moved in pairs, and families in groups
Each subgroup admiring the other

Her body cliffs, secluded valleys and her love lava stretching
to Seme Beach
Was she a ghost or fairy? Was she simply my imagination?
Or was this reincarnation?

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Mile Six Beach

We hit the highway heading South West
As we listened to Nat King Cole's best hits
Our destination, Mile Six Beach
In the heart of the rainy season

Somehow, the weather was bright with sunshine
The perfect blue sky, with patches of white clouds
Some resembled clusters of Fako ready to erupt
Others, like parading dinosaurs

The ocean waves slammed against the huge clustered shores
of volcanic rock
The mangrove trees swayed sideways to the music of the
wind
The kingfishers flew all about singing songs of the land
While hunting fishes by the shore

On the beach, a sampling of every nationality
A United Nations in the heart of Africa
Some wore dental floss, boxing shorts or braces
Others in tempting bikini stripes
Lovers moved in pairs, and families in groups
Each subgroup admiring the other

Everyone was having fun, enjoying the weather
No one talked of racism, HIV, wars or death
This corner of the Atlantic was absolute beauty and sanity
This day at Mile 6 Beach
In the heart of my Africa

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

The View from Ngeme Village

A bunch of innocent kids, naked and in rags, march down a
ramp
Leading straight into the mighty Atlantic
They anchor the wooden one-seater of a canoe
As ocean currents pound against the volcanic rocks

Coconut trees dance to the music of the wind
A village fisherman pulls in as the children evaluate his day's
catch
Upstream, adults take their bath
Where spring water drains into the salty ocean
Who is crossing the road, or stalling, crosses not their minds

Whites and uppity Africans sit in buckaroos well-kept
Sipping tea, coffee, or whatever, on this ocean corner
Watching the Africans as they swim and bathe
Enjoying the nearby Fako, the Harmattan – the nakedness
before them, too

It is tough to swim the gulf between the two worlds
One marked by extreme deprivation and hardship

Everyone was having fun, enjoying the weather
No one talked of racism, HIV, wars or death
This corner of the Atlantic was absolute beauty and sanity
This day at Mile 6 Beach
In the heart of my Africa

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

The View from Ngeme Village

A bunch of innocent kids, naked and in rags, march down a
ramp
Leading straight into the mighty Atlantic
They anchor the wooden one-seater of a canoe
As ocean currents pound against the volcanic rocks

Coconut trees dance to the music of the wind
A village fisherman pulls in as the children evaluate his day's
catch
Upstream, adults take their bath
Where spring water drains into the salty ocean
Who is crossing the road, or stalling, crosses not their minds

Whites and uppity Africans sit in buckaroos well-kept
Sipping tea, coffee, or whatever, on this ocean corner
Watching the Africans as they swim and bathe
Enjoying the nearby Fako, the Harmattan – the nakedness
before them, too

It is tough to swim the gulf between the two worlds
One marked by extreme deprivation and hardship

The other full of extreme wealth, gluttony and hedonism
How come this stark disparity demarcated today by such a
fine line?

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

The Cat and the Dog

The Siamese Cat had half a dozen beautiful kittens
She was young, strong and hard working single mother cat
Life was fun and perfect as the kittens grew up
Because the young mother cat provided all they needed

Some of the mature kittens began bearing their own siblings
The kittens and grand-kits were not hardworking and
industrious

Unfortunately the grandmother cat was growing older ad
weaker faster

She could no longer support her half dozen kittens and a
third of a dozen grand kits

Life became unpleasant and frustrating
One of the half dozen kittens was in fact pretty, hardworking,
intelligent

And was appreciated by all the family members
She was a role model to her sisters and neighboring kittens

The entire family looked up to her for their needs
Since the mother cat could no longer improvise
But she was still young, unprepared to assume parental
responsibilities
And even unable to support herself

The other full of extreme wealth, gluttony and hedonism
How come this stark disparity demarcated today by such a
fine line?

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

The Cat and the Dog

The Siamese Cat had half a dozen beautiful kittens
She was young, strong and hard working single mother cat
Life was fun and perfect as the kittens grew up
Because the young mother cat provided all they needed

Some of the mature kittens began bearing their own siblings
The kittens and grand-kits were not hardworking and
industrious

Unfortunately the grandmother cat was growing older ad
weaker faster

She could no longer support her half dozen kittens and a
third of a dozen grand kits

Life became unpleasant and frustrating
One of the half dozen kittens was in fact pretty, hardworking,
intelligent

And was appreciated by all the family members
She was a role model to her sisters and neighboring kittens

The entire family looked up to her for their needs
Since the mother cat could no longer improvise
But she was still young, unprepared to assume parental
responsibilities
And even unable to support herself

Since she was the only hope
She stretched herself
A little too far
So as to meet these unfair demands

Her best friend was a bourgeois German Shepherd dog who
lived
Virtually on principles and superior ethical values
He provided her moral, philosophical and ethical lessons
Because he admired her beauty, suppleness, agility and
indifference

Just as she started getting to appreciate the German
Shepherd's life-style and philosophy
Her family situation worsened and everyone looked up to her
for physiological needs
The German shepherd could not provide the kind of
Assistance needed by her family for moral and ethical reasons

She was helpless and had no one to turn to
She could not understand why her German shepherd friend
was so
Moralistically and ethically oriented
Fortunately, a coyote dog volunteered his services with
strings attached

Although the offer was too good to be refused, the pretty cat
still admired,
Respected and was too attached to the German Shepherd
She was caught between good and evil, reputation and family
The German Shepherd and the coyote dog; but she strived to
satisfy all

The pretty cat lost the admiration and protection
provided by the German shepherd
She also lost the appreciation and role model status
From the pet animals in their community and neighborhood

Because she was no longer special and indifferent
From her sisters nor the neighboring kittens
She was vulnerable, indeed, worried
And uncomfortable with the whole ordeal

Who is to blame?
The pretty cat?
The family?
The German Shepherd or the Coyote dog?

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

The Sex Controversy

The weaker sex!
Sits on the stronger sex
Controls its thoughts and actions
The source of its follies and passions
They call it the weaker sex

The weaker sex!
The overblown creation
That is this generation's song
The imagined captive of a sex
They call the stronger sex

The pretty cat lost the admiration and protection
provided by the German shepherd
She also lost the appreciation and role model status
From the pet animals in their community and neighborhood

Because she was no longer special and indifferent
From her sisters nor the neighboring kittens
She was vulnerable, indeed, worried
And uncomfortable with the whole ordeal

Who is to blame?
The pretty cat?
The family?
The German Shepherd or the Coyote dog?

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

The Sex Controversy

The weaker sex!
Sits on the stronger sex
Controls its thoughts and actions
The source of its follies and passions
They call it the weaker sex

The weaker sex!
The overblown creation
That is this generation's song
The imagined captive of a sex
They call the stronger sex

The weaker sex
Guided by those whose way of life it guides
Those cocooned in a misguided equation
That shortage of physical might
Equals a weaker sex

The weaker sex
Liberated for all time has been
Didn't you hear it said, alas
What a man can do a woman can?
Maybe the stronger sex?

Nay, the equal sex
Powerless under its master
Powerful over its slave
Slow, silent, top-down and bottom up
Yes, t'is the equal sex

Fonkeng E.f.

Na Man Kill Man

A broad smile he gloated
Through tobacco-brown set of teeth
As he showed the seat, in front of him
Preparing for the kill

“Mister Man, it's my considered opinion
Fifteen mistakes on the test weigh too heavy
Your inefficiency to conceal
“No, no protests!
Good luck elsewhere!”

The weaker sex
Guided by those whose way of life it guides
Those cocooned in a misguided equation
That shortage of physical might
Equals a weaker sex

The weaker sex
Liberated for all time has been
Didn't you hear it said, alas
What a man can do a woman can?
Maybe the stronger sex?

Nay, the equal sex
Powerless under its master
Powerful over its slave
Slow, silent, top-down and bottom up
Yes, t'is the equal sex

Fonkeng E.f.

Na Man Kill Man

A broad smile he gloated
Through tobacco-brown set of teeth
As he showed the seat, in front of him
Preparing for the kill

“Mister Man, it's my considered opinion
Fifteen mistakes on the test weigh too heavy
Your inefficiency to conceal
“No, no protests!
Good luck elsewhere!”

The sexy busts protruded
Through a transparent silky white
In his seat he shuffled uneasily
His eyes undressing her
As he plotted another night kill

“Miss, it’s my considered opinion
Fifty errors ain’t too plenty
To deny you the job
Your co-operation
Last night was marvelous.”

Fonkeng E.f.

My Way, Your way

We were best of friends
Despite our mutual admiration
And a desire to go the distance
There were social constraints

We were best friends
Your departure plans punctured our hearts
The fear of losing each other lingered on
There were professional constraints

All contact was severed with your departure
We traded blame for the long silence
without striving to break the ice
Your letter reached a year and half later

The sexy busts protruded
Through a transparent silky white
In his seat he shuffled uneasily
His eyes undressing her
As he plotted another night kill

“Miss, it’s my considered opinion
Fifty errors ain’t too plenty
To deny you the job
Your co-operation
Last night was marvelous.”

Fonkeng E.f.

My Way, Your way

We were best of friends
Despite our mutual admiration
And a desire to go the distance
There were social constraints

We were best friends
Your departure plans punctured our hearts
The fear of losing each other lingered on
There were professional constraints

All contact was severed with your departure
We traded blame for the long silence
without striving to break the ice
Your letter reached a year and half later

The break intensified, deviated interests,
values and responsibilities
Waning our mutual feelings for each other
Constraining our friendship

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Know Thyself

Know thyself, my friend
Know thyself
Know what lies within
Not without
Put something in thy head
Not on it

To understand others
Is to understand thyself
To know the world
Begins with thyself
Thyself is all you got
Let it rot, not

Fonge T. Tobias

The break intensified, deviated interests,
values and responsibilities
Waning our mutual feelings for each other
Constraining our friendship

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Know Thyself

Know thyself, my friend
Know thyself
Know what lies within
Not without
Put something in thy head
Not on it

To understand others
Is to understand thyself
To know the world
Begins with thyself
Thyself is all you got
Let it rot, not

Fonge T. Tobias

The Captive

Caught betwixt and bewitched
In a state of a double man
Seeking vainly the balance
Between a civilization of terror
Of silver-gilt savagery and violence
And a civilization in meek defense and servitude
Seeking to cast yonder his identity
And find it
Wanting his independence
But accepting dependence

The Captive
East or West for him?
Is home really the best?
Or *is the monkey right?*
Does greatness lie in the things
Of the *mukala?*

Does the sun
Rise in the West
And set in the East?
He looks South, the Captive
Shunning the blinding rays
Now in the North – to which he moves

Aware of the Cripple's dignity, he is
Yet learns to reject that which is his
Albeit the merits in which he sees
And that the shark's back's not a home

A two-faced man
Tormented by the worry of indecision
Is his 'bad' worse than their 'good'
Is their 'good' better than his 'bad'
Hard to find the balance – the answer

Fonkeng E.f.

Children

What source of joy to those who have
What anxiety to those who wait
What disillusionment to those who don't have
What delicate task to those who must bring them up
What fulfillment in those who succeed
What pain to those who do not

Are they really worth the trouble?
Do they really spice up life?
Do they guarantee a peaceful end?
Do they guarantee happiness?

Forsac D. Etogokwe

A two-faced man
Tormented by the worry of indecision
Is his 'bad' worse than their 'good'
Is their 'good' better than his 'bad'
Hard to find the balance – the answer

Fonkeng E.f.

Children

What source of joy to those who have
What anxiety to those who wait
What disillusionment to those who don't have
What delicate task to those who must bring them up
What fulfillment in those who succeed
What pain to those who do not

Are they really worth the trouble?
Do they really spice up life?
Do they guarantee a peaceful end?
Do they guarantee happiness?

Forsac D. Etogokwe

In Lighter Moments

Commotion, rowdiness
Eyes up, right, left
And up, right and left again
Catchin' glimpses
Catchin' whole images
As they straddle past
A mother popcorn here
A Cinderella there
To a mixed display
Of admiration and consternation

Then up, down
Up and down again
Gesticulating
Exchanging sordities here
Uttering provocations there
They seem to must
As these struggle past
It's just a moment in an amphitheatre
Of the Yaounde University

Fonkeng E.f.

My Best Friend

She was really my best friend
Slim sculptured-like body with elegant neck structure
That matched her long dark hair and well defined cheekbones
Although a mother of a baby girl
She desperately wanted another child
Irrespective of the gender

Then came the good news, she was pregnant
She couldn't wait to see her newborn baby
All discussions centered on the baby
And as the pregnancy approached its term
She'd call me on the phone and talk about her baby
'Cause she had no true trusted friend but me

She confided secrets, joys and mishaps
I listened with abundant patience
Then, one day an early morning phone call
She and the baby were gone – just hours after delivering
She was my best friend
May her soul rest in perfect peace

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Acada

What does it matter
If the people
With empty bowels
Still shouts can utter?

What does it matter
If the people
Still no word can utter
Even with stuffed mouths

Does it matter
If after our ‘breakthroughs’
And theories, them all
Stand still we do?

Unfree still
Brutish estranged?
The *acada* battle
For power
Over moeurs
For the self

Fonkeng E.f.

Na Wanda

Kontri pikin them, na weti noh?
Which kana fashion dis, dis time so?
Wuna say na nyong people life, eh?
Ah seeee

Acada

What does it matter
If the people
With empty bowels
Still shouts can utter?

What does it matter
If the people
Still no word can utter
Even with stuffed mouths

Does it matter
If after our ‘breakthroughs’
And theories, them all
Stand still we do?

Unfree still
Brutish estranged?
The *acada* battle
For power
Over moeurs
For the self

Fonkeng E.f.

Na Wanda

Kontri pikin them, na weti noh?
Which kana fashion dis, dis time so?
Wuna say na nyong people life, eh?
Ah seeee

So so waka waka
Woman oh
So so waka
Nyong boy, oh
So so waka

Dey say weti man do, woman fit do'am
(Ah ah! You noh see dey di wear trosa and shet)?
Tif sef, nyong girl dey inside now

Waka waka
Nyong boy and nyong girl
Tif tif sef
Na all dem
Dey inside oh

Ah seh kontri people, na weti?
Which kana world we dey inside dis time?
Wuna say na nyong people fashion, eh?

Ah seeee
Waka waka (na all dem)
Tif tif (na all dem)
Jealousy (na all dem)
Kongosai (na all dem)
Troway pikin for latrine (na wanda)
Moov beleh (na wanda)

Fonkeng E.f.

The Great Hawk

They put him inside a great hawk
I wept and begged them to let me too in
But they refused my awful pleadings

They refused all of them coldly
Then the hawk made a great noise
It's wings revolved dreadfully fast
Displacing huge volumes of air

Wonderfully huge volumes of air
The hawk raced fast along the ground
Like an immense ostrich
Making a deafening noise all around

All around and wide away
The hawk raced bearing away
My son in its hawling bowels
Oh where was it going with my son?

Flying away with a corpse of my son
Tears gushed freely from my eyes
I wondered how I would live henceforth
That son was my existence all and all

That son was all my hope
For sometime the hawk disappeared
Running very fast along the ground
Then it reappeared flying lowly past

Flying past us with a great noise
Far away it looked so very small

Like a flying insect
It flew fast and was now so small

Now so irreparably gone
Oh my son, oh my beloved son
What have men done with my son?
Oh my son, my only eye, my all

Fombin P.F.

Anxiety

The anxiety of waiting lengthens my nights
And renders my days meaningless
My mouth loses its taste buds
And food is reduced to chaff

The days are counted backwards
As the clock ticks the minutes away
How long have I to wait
For the spice of my life to be restored?

Forsac D. Etogokwe

Like a flying insect
It flew fast and was now so small

Now so irreparably gone
Oh my son, oh my beloved son
What have men done with my son?
Oh my son, my only eye, my all

Fombin P.F.

Anxiety

The anxiety of waiting lengthens my nights
And renders my days meaningless
My mouth loses its taste buds
And food is reduced to chaff

The days are counted backwards
As the clock ticks the minutes away
How long have I to wait
For the spice of my life to be restored?

Forsac D. Etogokwe

Brain Drain

The great march ex-Africa
Will they become the prodigal children?
As the wait continues
For the back to Africa march to commence

On their own and
Independent of their volition, they exit
The victims of their conscience - their crime
Africa's unwanted ambassadors
Africa's most wanted manpower

Wither Africa?
As your children roam the globe
In search of silver and gold
Of the good things of life'
Which you have in abundance?
You bleed on
From the trauma of antidevelopment
And they, discriminated
Their color, their crime

In their stead have stepped the 'specialists'
The fruit of the white-is-right mentality
The seed of the *Iroko*
Whose falling branches push young bananas
And upset roots, pull young plants
Leading all to their graves – its foundation!
Whither Africa?

Even the monkey does know
The shark's back's not a home

So whence stops the mass suicide
Africa, when?

Fonkeng E.f.

Unholy Trinity

They came in strides unlike, minds alike
Discovered and plundered
The Missionary, the military and the monetary - managers
Mercenaries, playing for a common cause
To colonize, to christianize –
Nay, to civilize

The rape of land and mind
They sweet-talked and code-talked
With their Missionary
Browbeat into submission
With their military
Flabbergasted and enticed
With their money

The rape of land and mind
The managers –
With a queer mannerism or two
Managing it all well
Their mode, their code, esoteric
Understood by them alone
Our fate we now understand

The rape of the land and mind
Like a rat's bite

So whence stops the mass suicide
Africa, when?

Fonkeng E.f.

Unholy Trinity

They came in strides unlike, minds alike
Discovered and plundered
The Missionary, the military and the monetary - managers
Mercenaries, playing for a common cause
To colonize, to christianize –
Nay, to civilize

The rape of land and mind
They sweet-talked and code-talked
With their Missionary
Browbeat into submission
With their military
Flabbergasted and enticed
With their money

The rape of land and mind
The managers –
With a queer mannerism or two
Managing it all well
Their mode, their code, esoteric
Understood by them alone
Our fate we now understand

The rape of the land and mind
Like a rat's bite

Our common grief
Their common harvest
Continues to spread, in
Five hundred fold and counting
The rape of land and mind

Fonkeng E.f.

To Ngwenka

Is this you, Ngwenka
That was once expansive, fresh water pool?
Is this you that was though very calm, mighty and fair?
Is this you that daily opened your bosom to us visitors?

The heat-bathed and mentally tired school children
Came tumbling down the steep slopes every noon
And in a split second tore off their tattered clothes
To dive into your dark fresh and inviting bosom

For hours, the naked boys, big and small
(Their things dancing to the tuneful music of innocence)
Exhausted their creative talent in games of all sorts
Exploring your darksome wide opened chambers

Is this you Ngwenka
Become so aridly barren?
The rugged underwater rocks
Now over-looking
The little patch of you?

Our common grief
Their common harvest
Continues to spread, in
Five hundred fold and counting
The rape of land and mind

Fonkeng E.f.

To Ngwenka

Is this you, Ngwenka
That was once expansive, fresh water pool?
Is this you that was though very calm, mighty and fair?
Is this you that daily opened your bosom to us visitors?

The heat-bathed and mentally tired school children
Came tumbling down the steep slopes every noon
And in a split second tore off their tattered clothes
To dive into your dark fresh and inviting bosom

For hours, the naked boys, big and small
(Their things dancing to the tuneful music of innocence)
Exhausted their creative talent in games of all sorts
Exploring your darksome wide opened chambers

Is this you Ngwenka
Become so aridly barren?
The rugged underwater rocks
Now over-looking
The little patch of you?

You lie on your cradle
Like an ant
Lying on an
Elephant's
Bed

Fombin P.F.

Crocodile Tears

Roam like a roving ghost
In search of a fairy tale castle
Only a shadow of my past glory
I now seem to must

Curse unto my strangler
Seventy-fold to my offspring
Who at akimbo stood and would not kill
This venomous Mamba, in self-defense

You drink from my poisoned fountain
You sway off the pendulum's pivot
(as) you slumber in your dance still
And inter me, half-alive

No sting did you attempt to dare
As the Hawk continues the chicken swoop
Slowly and surely, one by one
And now you shed tears for *Osagyefo?*

Fonkeng E.f.

You lie on your cradle
Like an ant
Lying on an
Elephant's
Bed

Fombin P.F.

Crocodile Tears

Roam like a roving ghost
In search of a fairy tale castle
Only a shadow of my past glory
I now seem to must

Curse unto my strangler
Seventy-fold to my offspring
Who at akimbo stood and would not kill
This venomous Mamba, in self-defense

You drink from my poisoned fountain
You sway off the pendulum's pivot
(as) you slumber in your dance still
And inter me, half-alive

No sting did you attempt to dare
As the Hawk continues the chicken swoop
Slowly and surely, one by one
And now you shed tears for *Osagyefo*?

Fonkeng E.f.

Bandit Hymn

Singing the bandit song
Everyday
Seems like life's bandwagon
That helter shelter to catch
The race we enter, anyway

Team mates, opponents, together
Singing, playing and marching
To the bandit song

Right notes, wrong chords
T'is everyone's song
The bandit song
Playing the song of time
Each and all
Yet blaming it on time
T'is become so hard, the quest
And money-find is rat race

Dancing to the bandit song
Knows no generation gap
Family and stranger
Parent and child
The sick and the strong
Each versus the other
In the chorus of the one and only song

The struggle continues
Money is the way
Did you hear that?

That life so strong
Office and street robbery
Mental and physical corruption
Positive Nos and negative Yeses
With conscience or with none
For money – for the self
We are singing, playing and marching
To the bandit song

Fonkeng E.f.

Ebamu of the Hills

She came from the hills every morning
And she came red as unripe plums
I saw her when she well could carry a kenja*
And saw she was as bright as the sun

Ebamu came every morning with the sun
And every eye that saw her gave a sigh
As she came down from the hills
Oh! Ebamu of the tall hills of Ngientu

From hill to hill and from valley to valley
From hut to hut and from compound to compound
The name Ebamu was mentioned by all
The melting Ebamu of the green hill of Ngientu

If it was work, Ebamu was smart
If a dance, her shoulders quivered
As if there was not a bone in her

That life so strong
Office and street robbery
Mental and physical corruption
Positive Nos and negative Yeses
With conscience or with none
For money – for the self
We are singing, playing and marching
To the bandit song

Fonkeng E.f.

Ebamu of the Hills

She came from the hills every morning
And she came red as unripe plums
I saw her when she well could carry a kenja*
And saw she was as bright as the sun

Ebamu came every morning with the sun
And every eye that saw her gave a sigh
As she came down from the hills
Oh! Ebamu of the tall hills of Ngientu

From hill to hill and from valley to valley
From hut to hut and from compound to compound
The name Ebamu was mentioned by all
The melting Ebamu of the green hill of Ngientu

If it was work, Ebamu was smart
If a dance, her shoulders quivered
As if there was not a bone in her

Ah! Ebamu was a child, a child
Everyone and everything loved Ebamu
Oh Ebamu! The red Ebamu of the hills
The melting Ebamu of the tall green Hills
Everything loved her and...the Leopard too

Down, downhill at sunrise that day
A sharp cry rang through the valley
Everyone and everything came to seek Ebamu
But woe! They found the red blood of Ebamu

For seven days they searched and searched
For seven full days they moaned and moaned
For seven full days they drummed and danced
And for seven full days Ebamu was not seen

Oh, the melting Ebamu of the green hill
Ah, the sunny Ebamu of the tall hill
Weh, the beloved Ebamu of Ngientu
Ugh, the red Ebamu of the Leopard

Fombin P.F.

Psycho-Vibration

Echoes of drum beats vibrated in my ears
Then a deep voice whispered
He's had an accident
It was like a dream

My feet dragged and my head grew larger
The voice pounded right into my head again and again
Suddenly, I regained consciousness and followed the message
Running as fast as I could through the crowded street

That must be his son
Whispered another strange voice from the crowd
I felt a repugnant vibration as I ran, ran, ran
Arriving at what looked like the accident scene

Another echo: hospital, hospital, and hospital
To the nearest hospital, I ran and ran and ran
He was bleeding to death
Doctor, call my son please, he cried out in agony

Here he is, said the Doctor
Son, I won't be alive before dawn
He died at midnight
I loved him, I did

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Mu-ngang

Some hate you, others like you, anyway
For what you did and can do, they say
Omnipotent and present you
Hope they forget not
You're but a double-edged spear
At the mercy of the marksman

We didn't, when we could use, you
To smite and smash the witch
The fault's not in you
Omnipotent and present you
But in we who have used you
To smite and smash kith and kin

Fonkeng E.f.

The Accident

It was raining cats and dogs
A suspicion ran through my mind
An immediate farm inspection came to mind
My instinct was rendered exact
The farm was flooded

It was raining cats and dogs
My truck got stuck in the mud while searching
The side rear mirrors and back windshield were dampened
With persistent inferior visibility in and out
As I searched for a rescue drainage team

It was raining cats and dogs
When an unpleasant noise was heard behind my truck
The cry of a vigorous sword sucker with her mother being
crushed
The mother plant was carrying a beautiful five weeks old
Ten-hand bunch with a blue ribbon on it

It was raining cats and dogs
As I pruned the dead sword sucker, chopped her mother and
fruit
I was “water soaked” all through the operation
It was agonizing and painful to execute the pruning and
chopping exercise
To save my asphyxiating banana

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

The Night Train

Passenger-victims, sturdy and frail
Looks menacing, and meek
Like tigers defending territory
Or lamb seeking out survival

Cargo, under and around them
Women, babies glued to their backs, crying
All praying – for some salvation

Under the squelching sun and into the moonlight
They must wait, fighting out these awful hours
Families bid multiple farewells

Finally, the monstrous metallic snake shows up
It's a mad battle to board
Madder still the next phase – for seats

A sudden deafening horn follows another eternity
The huge thing jerks forward
Dark smoke engulfs the pristine atmosphere

Then, an angry and nonchalant loudspeaker scream
The train will be leaving in five minutes
No one heeds, for it never does

The boarding battle, now a penultimate war
For seats – any kind of space
This is Existence, here and now

Again, the monster jerks forward. And stops!
Sending its screaming human cargo

Bumping into metal, livestock and cargo

Just the start to a three-hundred mile, twelve-hour nightmare
With thieves, watchful for a loose wallet, or anything
As ‘travelers’ sell “their” seats to the frail and desperate

Vendors galore peddling everything and anything
Foodstuffs, water, alcohol, clothes, gadgets, open and
concealed
Squeezing their way through human and other cargo, in the
dark

Tonight there are fifteen aged wagons, packed full
Ninety-nine sitting, nine ninety-nine standing
Suffering and smiling, the popular song says

As this monster creaks and crawls from side to side
And passengers mimic, in spite of themselves, the dance
Of the night train on the Douala-Yaounde line

Fonkeng E.f.

Out of Sight

Like a storm you came into my life
Shaking the building to its very foundation
Re-arranging all the furniture to your taste
A taste even more pleasing to me

The ball has been set rolling
God helps the direction it takes
To arrive at the destination you set
And make your job complete

Your leave and absence hurt
Your job for me is so demanding
Where are you to reduce the load
To make the job light for me

For a month you'll be gone
For a month I'll have to wait
For your smiles and crazy thoughts
Thank God it is only a leave

Forsac D. Etogokwe

Mariana Mariana

I was moved to hot tears
When I saw her lie so still
In her snow-white garments
Many there were, men and women
Young and old, tearful folk
Sitting around still little Mariana

Her mother sat on the bare floor
Pouring tears most abundantly
And she poured forth such poetry

Then the coffin was swung in
A smart small coffin for little Mariana
Who lay un-redeemably so still

You thought she felt proud to go
As she looked neat and stiff and proud
Proud she had so irreparably gone

They picked up little Mariana
And they put her in her small thing
Her mother gesticulating like mad

She walked loudly and painfully
She spoke such pitiful words
Nobody could hold back tears

Tears were shed for the little Mariana
As she lay so still and beautiful
So sweetly beautiful in death

Fombin P.F.

Telepathy

It was a beautiful silent day
Blues skies and patches of white clouds
The sunrays came from a seventy-degree Northeast angle
Abortively striving to penetrate the gigantic compound,
surrounded
With coconut and assorted fruit trees. There was absolute
silence

A Negro boy stood at the gate with crossed arms, staring at
the large white fence
Admiring the naturalness of the fruit trees and flowers
The birds sang their favorite seductive songs to their mates as
The Negro boy gazed, pondering whether or not to ring the
doorbell
Because it was absolutely calm, quiet and silent

He was filled with love, joy and ecstasy to be there
He was also filled with agony, fright and anguish to be there
He wished his special friend would answer the doorbell as it
rang
So they could share his love, joy and ecstasy as before
No one answered his call, although he was so close to
happiness

The birds seized the singing as the doorbell rang
continuously. It was absolutely calm,
Quiet and silent again when the Negro boy stopped ringing
the doorbell
He was filled with emptiness, loneliness, agony and fright. His
friend had left

He felt the pain of solitude and hoped they would meet somewhere again.

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

My Name is Pungo

Daddy, daddy, can we accept a cat for a present?
Hell no, over my dead body, I exclaimed. And guess what
Daddy?

It is called Pungo; called Pungo? Waooh, ok we can have it
Woupi, woupi, thank you daddy, thank you, thank you

It was gentle and soft like a double Y chromosome person
With blue eyes and blend of brownish-gray color
It looked like an expensive Italian marble when lying down
With dark gray rings on its rear legs and tail

Every morning and evening it spoke to me in cat's language,
meow, meow

It will walk me to the kitchen to get coffee and to my study
room

It will lie on my books or thighs while I'm reading
It would flirt with its eyes and speak to me in cat's language,
meow, and meow

It is really called Pungo, named after my banana plantation
A dead farm later transformed into a showcase
A showcase that triggered envy, restricted reasoning moral
and
Value judgement amongst pessimists and denouncers of hard
work

He felt the pain of solitude and hoped they would meet somewhere again.

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

My Name is Pungo

Daddy, daddy, can we accept a cat for a present?
Hell no, over my dead body, I exclaimed. And guess what
Daddy?

It is called Pungo; called Pungo? Waooh, ok we can have it
Woupi, woupi, thank you daddy, thank you, thank you

It was gentle and soft like a double Y chromosome person
With blue eyes and blend of brownish-gray color
It looked like an expensive Italian marble when lying down
With dark gray rings on its rear legs and tail

Every morning and evening it spoke to me in cat's language,
meow, meow

It will walk me to the kitchen to get coffee and to my study
room

It will lie on my books or thighs while I'm reading
It would flirt with its eyes and speak to me in cat's language,
meow, and meow

It is really called Pungo, named after my banana plantation
A dead farm later transformed into a showcase
A showcase that triggered envy, restricted reasoning moral
and
Value judgement amongst pessimists and denouncers of hard
work

It was indeed a showcase worth recognition from
chronologists

And those who treasure hard work

I love Pungo my cat, although it got all the attention

I love Pungo my showcase banana plantation

Esendugue Greg Fonsab

Endnotes

Acada – refers to someone who has acquired too much academic knowledge, or the process of acquiring such education. Term often used in a derogatory manner, e.g. a bookworm or someone displaying bookish tendencies.

Akara (or makara) – bean paste deep fried in palm oil

Birocol – Bishop Rogan College, a secondary grammar school and a prep college for prospective priests, near Buea, Cameroon.

econs – Economics

Fako (Mount) – Also known as “Mount Cameroon, is a volcanic massif in southwestern Cameroon that rises to a height of 13,435 feet (4,095 meters) and extends 14 miles (23 km) inland from the Gulf of Guinea. It is the highest peak in sub-Saharan western and central Africa and the westernmost extension of a series of hills and mountains that form a natural boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria”.

Da man – that man

Iroko – signifies colonialism and imperialism

Kenja – basket used for transporting produce. It is usually carried on the head

Ngeme – a village close to Mile Six Beach, Limbe (Cameroon)

Ngungu – The peak point that serves as the geographical boundary between the Anglophone and Francophone Mbo areas of Cameroon. It also served as the German military base prior to WWI.

Mens sana in corpore sano – A sound mind in a sound body

Mukala - Whiteman

Or is the monkey right? – stems from the Pidgin saying ‘Monkey say anywhere na home – “The monkey says anywhere is home”.

Osagyefo – Kwameh Nkrumah, who campaigned for a pan-Africanist state as the only viable defense against imperialism

summum bonum – virtue of the highest order

About the Authors

Epah Fonkeng is an actor and broadcaster who writes under the pen name Fonkeng E. f. In the 1980s he took to penning down “expressions of impressions formed on life’s myriad ways” and as “a form of therapy” to help him recover from three tragic experiences in quick succession. Passionate about all things artistic, this former journalism lecturer has taught African dance, established a choral group, played conga and sang back-up vocals in a band, and established and served as artistic director of a drama group. His poems have been published in Canada where he lives and works as a Communications Consultant. His other works include *The Captive*, a play on the love-hate relationship between two colonial language-cultures, two books of children’s stories in the Under the Baobab series, which he created, and *Thru’ the Eye of a Needle* (staged at the Ottawa International Tulip Festival). He has just finished his first novel, and is currently working on another children’s story book.

Esendugue Greg Fonsah, the Traditional Chief of Nshimbeng, Lebock-Mbo who holds a doctorate from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and a former International Corporate Executive, is an Associate Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Georgia, Tifton, Georgia (USA). He co-authored the *Economics of Banana Production and Marketing in the Tropics* (1995), Minerva Press, London, recently republished by Langaa Research & Publishing CIG, Mankon, Bamenda (2012). He’s also published over 300 different scientific and non-scientific journals, book chapters, bulletins, extensions, proceedings, posters and trade articles. An avid martial arts

practitioner and teacher, he is also into swimming, music, golf and all aspect of football (coach, referee and active player). Poetry remains a strong passion of his with his poems having appeared in a number of anthologies in the USA including *The Best Poems of The '90s*, *The Space Between* and *The Windows of Soul*. He has travelled and worked extensively in Africa, Europe and Asia. He is married and the father of two children.

Fombin, Patrick F. holds degrees from the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, where he is currently teaching in the Department of African Literature.

Fonge, Tembong Tobias graduated from the Department of English, University of Yaounde in 1987. He is a father of two and presently resides in Gainesville, Georgia, USA.

Forsac Amatus holds degrees in Business Administration, Mathematics and Computing Science, a post-graduate Diploma in Applied Information Technology as well as accreditation from the Canadian Securities Institute. He currently works with the Direct Investing division of TD Waterhouse Inc., in Canada, and he is the Director and co-founder of the Seven Masterminds Inc., a start-up company just founded in 2011 by business partners that are involved in varying ventures in Canada, the USA and other parts of the world. Mr. Forsac is writing another book with 6 other co-authors soon to be published in Canada titled "*Diary of the Seven Virgins*". Mr. Forsac is married and has two sons. His hobbies include sports, music and poetry.

Forsac Dorothy Etogokwe did her secondary and high school education in G. S. S. Nyasoso, Queen of the Rosary

College, Okoyong and Cameroon College of Arts and Sciences, Kumba. She later graduated from the University of Yaounde with a Bachelor degree in English Literary Studies and a Postgraduate Diploma in English Literature. She is currently an Instructor of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Buea, Cameroon, where she is a PhD candidate. She holds a combined Masters degree and a Postgraduate Diploma in Women and Gender Studies, from the University of Buea, Cameroon.

First Harvests are expressions of impressions on a variety of local and universal phenomena and states of being. It is the first ever poetry collection by a few sons and daughters of Nkongho-Mbo, a subgroup of the Mbo ethnic group of Cameroon, on which very little has been published. The poems however transcend the geographical, cultural and emotional landscapes that have inspired them.

FONKENG E.F. lives in Canada, where he works as Policy Communication Officer for the Government of Canada.

FONSAH E.G. is Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia, Tifton Campus, Georgia, USA.



Langaa Research & Publishing
Common Initiative Group
P.O. Box 902 Mankon
Bamenda
North West Region
Cameroon

ISBN 978-9956-728-04-6



9 789956 728046